

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 18 July 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Robert Breakspear (Chair), Wendy Brooks (Deputy Chair), Neil Coleby, Christian Newsome, Andy Pearce, Bernadette Rappensberger and Elise Youngman

In Attendance: Shona Bendix (Town Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

Public: One member of the public was in attendance (in person)

39. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report was explained and the meeting was welcomed.

40. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Pitts, Smith and Webb with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of apologies received; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.

41. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

41.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda – Cllr Brooks declared she had requested items 55 and 56 on the agenda as they were queries received from local residents, and she had requested item 58 on the agenda. Cllr Pearce declared he was Chair of the Gunton Residents Association. Cllr Breakspear declared he was a member of the Friends of Kensington Gardens.

41.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

42. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 20 June 2023

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the minutes subject to further detail being provided for item 31.2; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

43. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – The member of the public queried the progress on the Town Council asserting ownership of the land under the trees in the Uplands area.

48.23. Land at Upland's Road North (including pond) – This item was brought forward and the member of the public was invited to comment. The Deputy Clerk was progressing the assertion of ownership of land and establishing the extent of the Town Council's liability in the event of trespassing as it would not be insured in that case.

No timescale could be provided as the office had a schedule of tree works across the parish and required advice from the insurers before a contractor could be arranged. Officers were also examining whether the land had been under the management of a Local Authority previously and, if all Local Authorities were recognised as a single entity, then the required

Lowestoft Town Council
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First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 18 July 2023

twelve years of occupation to assert ownership could be reduced.

It was noted that 48.23 referred to land already owned by the Town Council and works to be done per the five-year plans, whilst the query from the member of the public was not itemised on this agenda.

The member of the public was asked to provide the office with contact details of a tree surgeon he had previously recommended.

Cllr Brooks escorted the member of the public from the chamber at 19:18

44. To monitor expenditure by this Sub-Committee from its delegated budget

It was requested to receive confirmation of the appointed contractor for the tree audits per the delegation to progress the procurement of tree audits.

Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 19:20

45. To receive an update on watering collection, storage and access in parks

Officers were examining the risk management of water storage and the use of spring water and had contacted Essex and Suffolk Water and Greener Suffolk for advice.

The Committee Clerk noted that the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee were leading on this and the item need not be duplicated across multiple agendas.

The risk of chlorine highlighted in recent advice was considered a contradiction of the information provided by the Health and Safety Consultant, and the Clerk confirmed officers were contacting the appropriate water authority to understand the options for progressing water storage.

Cllr Brooks suggested the research on this item be delegated to officers and brought back to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee with recommendations, with Suffolk Wildlife Trust suggested as another potential point of contact.

Soaker hoses were suggested as an alternative method to dispense water as they presented a low risk of legionella.

46. To consider an annual planting plan for 2023-2024

Concerns were raised on the order of Scilla Hispanica Bluebells rather than the Hyacinthoides English Bluebells, and the concentration of orders for Narcissus Pink Charm and no other plants for certain sites.

Cllr Coleby offered to provide the office with the previous planting plan he had compiled.

Cllr Pearce proposed, due to the time constraints, to delegate the 2023-2024 planting plan to officers, in conjunction with this Sub-Committee, with Cllr Coleby's previous planting plan to be considered and inform discussions; seconded by Cllr Brooks.

Cllr Coleby queried the progress for the pink garden, winter garden and sensory garden, and the ten-year snowdrop plan.

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 18 July 2023

Cllr Brooks requested an item on the next agenda to discuss increasing the planting of hedges and shrubs.

Cllr Pearce requested an item on October's agenda to consider December 2023 and January 2024 orders of Snowdrops, Winter Aconites and Bluebells for winter planting in February 2024.

It was queried whether the grounds maintenance officers would be able to attend meetings of this Sub-Committee, or arrange standalone meetings, to receive their input on planting plans. The Clerk noted that the grounds maintenance workers were too busy in this transition period, and the Project and Committee Clerk was meeting with officers and Friends Groups to receive input on the plans.

A vote was held on Cllr Pearce's proposal and all were in favour.

47. To consider officer proposals for commemorating the 150th anniversary of the opening of Belle Vue Park

The Sub-Committee highlighted a few areas for improvement, notably that the location of the cemetery on the map was incorrect and that the David Parr memorial had been mapped but not the Tom Crisp memorial.

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the project, with the suggested improvements to be actioned, and for officers to continue pursuing quotes and decide on the location of the panel; seconded by Cllr Pearce. Cllr Coleby offered to provide photos. The Clerk confirmed the necessary officers had been contacted on planning permission and that to respect the Grade II listing of the park, the materials for the information panel would be high quality. A vote was held with all in favour.

48. To consider review and implementation of the five year plans in line with budgeting, noting Councillors' comments regarding the following:

- 48.1 Normanston Park
- 48.2 Rosedale Park
- 48.3 Kensington Gardens
- 48.4 Gunton Community Park
- 48.5 Great Eastern Linear Park
- 48.6 Sparrows Nest
- 48.7 Fen Park
- 48.8 Belle Vue Park
- 48.9 Denes Oval
- 48.10 Cotman Close
- 48.11 Britten Road Play Area
- 48.12 Clarkes Lane
- 48.13 Pakefield Green Play Area (Wellington Road)
- 48.14 The Ness
- 48.15 Ness Point
- 48.16 St Margaret's Plain Play Area
- 48.17 Bentley Drive Play Area
- 48.18 Gainsborough Drive Pond
- 48.19 North Denes
- 48.20 Links Road Car Park

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 18 July 2023

- 48.21 Triangle Market
- 48.22 Town Green
- 48.23 Land at Upland's Road North (including pond)

A suggestion had been made by the Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee to consider the provision of circular seating around trees in open spaces, such as Rosedale Park, to offer shade in the hot summers.

The Sub-Committee noted that nearly £27,000 remains in the Parks and Open Spaces capital budget for the rest of the financial year and that careful consideration will be required for expenditure.

The Sub-Committee agreed that residents could be engaged via online consultation on new provision for the parks, including shade provision, and aim to receive feedback from across the parish and all generations. Cllr Coleby offered to provide contact details for the Waveney Youth Forum (via the Communities Team at East Suffolk) to the office. Officers would contact this forum and other external bodies (such as East Coast College and Ormiston Denes) and provide an update to the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee needed to establish how the remaining £27,000 would be allocated for the first year of the five-year plans; whether expenditure would be focussed on one area or spread across three or four sites and if it would be used for planting or building structures.

Cllr Youngman queried the absence of green fencing against the trees at Britten Road and the Clerk clarified it was due to investigation as part of the grounds survey, the report of which had been received.

49. To consider the following regarding the St Margaret's Plain play area:

- 49.1 An update on the possible removal of the telephone box – The Committee Clerk confirmed this was scheduled for removal and the electricity supply had been terminated. Cllr Brooks thanked officers for their work on resolving this issue.
- 49.2 To approve a design for the information panel – The Sub-Committee agreed that option three was not appropriate, noting that whilst it would be displayed near the children's play area, families and residents of all ages would be viewing the panel.

Cllr Coleby raised concerns on the design of option two, with the pinned notes and the wood background appearing false, whilst the cream background for option one was not viable, and suggested an alternative background colour of the Town Council colours or the grey-green colour of the heritage plaques. It was suggested to also include a QR code on the panel. The text may also require amendment and it was suggested to either use the same script as the Town Council logo for consistency, or to use Arial script in 12 size print as the standard text format of the Town Council.

Cllr Pearce proposed approval of design two, with officers to refine the font and background colours as suggested, ensuring that any alterations to the background colours maintain the required contrast to the text for accessibility. The QR code could be considered, but to avoid delay it could be added next to the panel after installation. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 18 July 2023

50. To consider initial advice and costs for the development of a pump track

It was requested that the research and enquiries into the development of a pump track and submission to Full Council for approval be progressed over the next three months so that the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee are aware of the budget requirements (with and without external funding or grants) and the delivery timescale when planning the budget in December 2023. It was noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy may not be an option for funding as the amount received tended to fluctuate each year.

51. To receive an update on the public survey regarding the drying racks

Councillors had received feedback from the public on the survey, with suggestions on using free-form comment boxes rather than 'yes' or 'no' options and concerns that the survey did not ask the right questions. The survey was due to close at the beginning of August and when the results have been collated and brought back to this Sub-Committee, these feedback comments would also be considered.

52. To consider the installation of decorative features to the Sparrows Nest Sensory Garden, including cost and permissions

Quotes had been received from Pathways Care Farm for the addition of decorative features to the Sensory Garden which require planning permission. Cllr Pearce proposed to support Pathways Care Farm's suggestion and fund the cost of the necessary planning applications; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

53. To consider a request for a petange (French boules) area at Kensington Gardens near the Boating Lake

Cllr Pearce proposed the request be clarified with the member of the public who submitted it, querying if they were seeking a full-sized pétanque and where they wanted it located near the Boating Lake as it may be difficult to accommodate a full-length pétanque.

As this request had been received from one person, it was suggested to ask residents about what sports facilities they want to be developed in Lowestoft. This could form part of the survey to residents discussed under item 48.

Cllr Pearce proposed this item be deferred for one month whilst the Friends of Kensington Gardens consider the request and clarify with the member of the public if they were seeking a full-sized pétanque and where they wanted it located. Cllr Breakspear advised that the Friends of Kensington Gardens need not be involved at this stage of discussion. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

54. To consider how the Town Council may support the Hedgehog Highway Project

It was noted that this initiative was more suited to implementation on a residential level rather than the Town Council's open spaces. Cllr Brooks proposed to support the initiative, with their information to be made available on the Town Council website; seconded by Cllr Pearce, who requested that Lowestoft and District Allotments Ltd be made aware of the information; all in favour.

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
19:00 on 18 July 2023

55. To consider the feasibility of a new sculpture in Lowestoft depicting the Fisher Girls

This sculpture would form part of a wider heritage plan for The Ness and could be incorporated with any future plans for the drying racks. A site review would be required as the contamination areas would limit foundations for a sculpture.

Cllr Pearce proposed a Working Group be established to review plans for this sculpture, the drying racks and the sea wall mural, with the first meeting to take place after the drying racks survey has closed to review the collated feedback; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; all in favour.

56. To consider widening of the entrance and a height restriction barrier at the Links Road car park

This item had been raised due to public comments on the narrow entrance however the Clerk confirmed the entrance had not been narrowed or widened. Cllr Brooks proposed no changes be made to the entrance; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

57. To consider a nomination for the 2023 East Suffolk Council Quality of Place Awards

Cllr Brooks suggested Kensington Gardens or St Margaret's Plain be nominated. It was acknowledged that the deadline for nominations was Friday 21 July and officers had limited availability to compile the necessary documents for nomination.

At 21:00 Cllr Pearce proposed to suspend standing orders for ten minutes; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.

Cllr Brooks suggested she make nominations in her personal capacity which the Sub-Committee agreed would be her personal choice. Cllr Pearce proposed the Sub-Committee consider nominations from the Town Council next year; seconded by Cllr Breakspear; six voted in favour and one abstained.

58. To consider the development of community gardens

Cllr Brooks noted that Greenprint Forum supplied a comprehensive task list of how to set up a community garden. As the Gunton Estate Residents Meeting Hall Management Committee had expressed an interest in managing the community garden near the hall, Cllr Pearce proposed officers progress this arrangement via the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee to provide the necessary support and permissions to develop the community garden in partnership with the Town Council as a pilot project. Cllrs Brooks and Coleby declared they were members of the Greenprint Forum. This item would be discussed further at the next meeting. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

59. Date of the next meeting

15 August 2023 19:00

60. Items for the next Agenda and Close

Any items should be sent to the office. Cllr Pearce requested the snowdrop plan be included in the five-year plan for Belle Vue Park.

61. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be

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19:00 on 18 July 2023

excluded from the Meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues relating to the matters on this agenda

There were no resolutions.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21:11

Signed:

15 August 2023